



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Accomplishment Report

The **Alpena Fishery Resources Office (Alpena FRO)** is located in Alpena, Michigan and works to meet U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fishery and Ecosystem goals within Lake Huron, Western Lake Erie, and connecting waters of the St. Marys River, St. Clair River, and Detroit River. Activities include Aquatic Species Conservation and Management, Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management, Cooperation with Native Americans, Leadership in Science and Technology, Partnerships and Accountability, Public Use, and Workforce Management – all of which are conducted in alignment with the Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future. The station is one of many field offices located within Region 3, the Great Lakes Big Rivers Region.

## Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

### Lake Huron and St. Marys River Ports Surveyed for New Populations of Invasive Species

*Submitted by Anjanette Bowen  
Fishery Biologist*

Alpena FRO conducted surveillance for new populations of invasive species and documented the existing fish community at shipping ports and rivers in northwestern Lake Huron and the St. Marys River during September and October (9/19-10/04). A total of 12 locations including 8 sites in Lake Huron and 4 sites in the St. Marys River were surveyed with bottom trawling gear. A target of 30 minutes of effort was conducted at each sample site.



No new populations of invasive species were detected. Eurasian ruffe (ruffe) were not found at any locations and round goby (goby) continue to persist at Lake Huron locations. Neither ruffe nor goby have been found in the St. Marys River to date.

A total of 26 species were captured including 24 species in Lake Huron and 15 species in the St. Marys River during 215 and 110 minutes of effort respectively. Bottom water temperatures

during the survey ranged from 9.1 - 19.4°C, and averaged 14.2°C in Lake Huron and 10.9°C in the St. Marys River.

Biologist Bowen coordinated survey efforts with assistance from Biologists Kowalski, Rawlings and Boase. We are grateful to Jordan River National Fish Hatchery Fishery Biologist John Johnston who also provided needed assistance.

Alpena FRO is committed to the conservation of native species through the monitoring and control of aquatic nuisance species. This effort is consistent with the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority for "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management".

## **Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management**

### **Fish Passage Restoration Along the Potagannissing River on Drummond Island**

*Submitted by Susan Wells  
Fishery Biologist*

On September 22, the Potagannissing Dam project was completed. A small dam existed on the Potagannissing River, within 3 miles of the Harbor Island NWR in Potagannissing Bay. This structure traditionally has blocked upstream passage of many fish species, particularly native northern pike, walleye, and white sucker. Many marsh-like lakes exist upstream of this dam and has historically provided ideal spawning habitat



for northern pike before passage was blocked. The Michigan DNR installed an old, denial style fish ladder was located at the dam in the 1970's, but it has never proven successful at passing fish both upstream and downstream.

The fish ladder was removed as part of the project and the headwall of the dam completely removed. A series of four rock weirs were placed below the removed headwall to create a rock fish-ramp thereby reducing slope and creating appropriate resting pools for upstream migration of important native species, particularly northern pike which have been declining in this region. Partners for this project included the Michigan DNR who completed the design, survey, and permit work for this project, and the Drummond Island Sportsman's Club. They were an integral partner who brought this project to our attention and contributed monetary funds towards its

completion. This project restored 1 mile of riverine habitat and provided access to 434 acres of wetland habitat for migrating fish within the Potagannissing Bay.

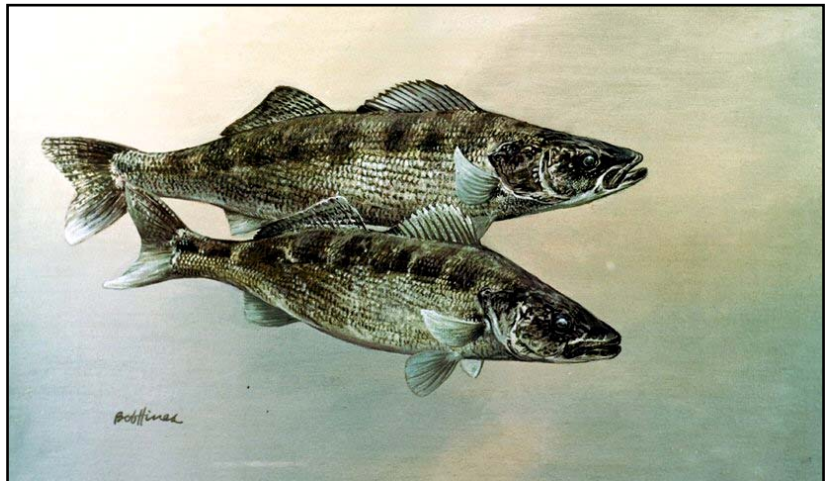
This is an example of collaboration between federal, state and local governments and watershed groups to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources including native brook trout. This project involved collaboration between many partners and addresses the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority of "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management".

## **Cooperation with Native Americans**

### **Alpena FRO Assists Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority with Walleye Assessments in 1836 Treaty Waters**

*Submitted by Scott Koproski  
Fishery Biologist*

During the week of September 18, Fishery Biologist Scott Koproski traveled to Sault Ste. Marie, MI to assist the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority (CORA) with their annual juvenile walleye assessment of the St. Marys River. Using the Alpena FRO electrofishing vessel, Koproski and 2 CORA staff sampled 3



locations in the St Marys River system (Waiska Bay, Lake George, Sugar Island Side Channel) over 3 nights. The objective of this work is to determine the contribution of hatchery reared walleye to the St. Marys River walleye population and to index juvenile walleye abundance. Hatchery stocked walleye are immersed in oxytetracycline (OTC) prior to release. OTC leaves a mark on calcified structures like otoliths and vertebrae that can be detected in the lab. Data collected will also be used to determine appropriate stocking levels and stocking locations for this system. Staff from the Alpena FRO has been assisting CORA with this walleye assessment for the past 13 years.

Assessment of walleye in the St. Marys River is another example of the Alpena FRO's commitment to the following Fisheries Program Vision for the Future Priorities: "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" and "Cooperation with Native Americans". Walleye are both a recreationally and commercially important species in 1836 Treaty waters. The Alpena FRO will continue to evaluate stocking success by CORA in the future which will benefit the resource and all harvesting parties.

## **Service Biologist Chairs Modeling Subcommittee Meeting for 1836 Treaty Waters**

*Submitted by Aaron Woldt  
Fishery Biologist*

Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt of the Alpena FRO attended and chaired the September 19-21 meeting of the Modeling Subcommittee (MSC) of the Technical Fisheries Committee (TFC). The primary focus of this meeting was to generate preliminary 2007 harvest limits for lake whitefish management units in 1836 Treaty waters of lakes Huron, Superior, and Michigan, although other technical matters were discussed. As stipulated in the 2000 Consent Decree, preliminary lake whitefish harvest limits must be calculated by the MSC, reviewed by the TFC, and presented to the parties to the decree by November 1 each year.

In addition to performing lake whitefish model analyses, biologist Woldt ran the MSC meeting ensuring all agenda items were discussed and kept meeting minutes. A preliminary draft of the September 19-21 MSC meeting minutes was mailed to MSC members for review. Preliminary lake whitefish harvest limits will be presented to the TFC for review on October 27. The MSC will complete final lake whitefish harvest limits and present them to the TFC at its December meeting.

Harvest limits produced at this meeting, when reviewed by the parties and approved, will become binding 2006 lake whitefish harvest limits for 1836 Treaty waters. These harvest limits will allow lake whitefish fisheries to be executed while still protecting the biological integrity of the lake whitefish stocks. This outcome is consistent with the Service's goal of building and maintaining self-sustaining populations of native fish species while meeting the needs of tribal communities under the "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management" and "Cooperation with Native Americans" priorities of the Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

## **Partnerships and Accountability**

### **Prey Fish Collections Made for Study of Salmon and Trout Response to Declining Prey Abundance in Lake Huron**

*Submitted by Anjanette Bowen  
Fishery Biologist*

During September and October, Alpena FRO collected samples of prey fish for a Great Lakes Fishery Commission funded study to determine salmon and lake trout response to declining prey abundance in Lake Huron. Alpena FRO is an associated investigator for the study which is coordinated by Jim Bence of Michigan State University and Ji He and James Johnson of the Michigan DNR Alpena Fishery Research Station.

Prey were collected during annual fall trawling efforts to detect new populations of aquatic nuisance species. Samples were collected from 13 species at 9 ports from DeTour to Harbor

Beach. Prey samples will be provided to Michigan State University where they will be combusted to determine their energy density and value to predators. The USGS and MDNR will also be collecting prey samples for this study.

We are grateful to District Fisheries Biologist Jim Baker with the Michigan DNR – Bay City Field Office who provided needed assistance during prey sample collections.

This effort is consistent with the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priorities for "Partnerships and Accountability" and "Aquatic Species Conservation and Management".

## **Public Use**

### **Alpena FRO Participates in Scoutfest 2006**

*Submitted by Scott Koproski  
Fishery Biologist*

On September 23, Fishery Biologist Scott Koproski participated in the 2006 Scoutfest hosted by the Thunder Bay Recreational Center in Alpena, MI. Scoutfest is an event where boy and girl scout troops from Northeast Michigan come together and spend a weekend together. There are many event that the scouts can participate in such as archery, monkey bridge, rock climbing, and campfire cooking just to name a few. There were over 130 boy and girl scouts who participated in the event.

Biologist Koproski had over 75 scouts stop by the booth Alpena FRO set up for the event. Many of the kids had some sort of fishing story they wanted to share such as "I caught a fish that was as big as I am" or "I don't like fish because they are slimmy." Games, fish mounts, and brochures were made available to all who stopped by to see the exhibit. Koproski provided information on Aquatic Nuisance Species, native species and fielded a variety of questions dealing with the Great Lakes Ecosystem. By providing the scouts a brief exposure to the work of the science professions it may entice a few to choose a similar career path as adults.

This event is another example of Alpena FRO's commitment to the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority for "Public Use".



## Naturefest for the Kids

*Submitted by Susan Wells  
Fishery Biologist*

Biologist Wells participated in an annual day-long outdoor festival at the Sprinkler Lake Education Center in Harrisville Michigan on September 23. There were interactive science displays, horse rides, crafts, and a petting zoo. The Alpena FRO provided a booth at the event with educational material, fish puzzles, and partnered with the Huron Pines RC&D to operate an interactive watershed model. The model depicts the path of



sediments, and pollutants after a rain event when buffers such as trees and wetlands are lost. Approximately 300 children and adults visited the booth. The festival allowed the Alpena FRO the opportunity to fulfill one of the station goals of distributing information to the general public about fish and wildlife resources, natural ecosystems and programs of the Service.

This accomplishment was an educational and outreach opportunity. We were able to showcase the Service to the public and educate people on the aquatic resources available in the Great Lakes. Approximately 300 people visited the Alpena FRO fisheries booth and display providing an outlet to educate and interact with children on issues regarding Great Lakes aquatic resources. This event addressed the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority for "Public Use".



### Alpena FRO Accomplishment Report

**September 2006**

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For more information on Alpena FRO programs and activities or to view other station reports visit our website located at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/alpena/>.